

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the present application.

1. (Currently Amended) A door latch assembly for installation on a door of a vehicle, the door having an inner panel, an outer panel, and a cavity defined between at least portions of the inner and outer panels, the inner panel having an interior side, the door latch assembly comprising:
 - a latch securable to the door at least partially within the cavity and actuatable between a plurality of states;
 - a linkage coupled to the inner panel, the linkage being operably coupled to the latch and accessible from the interior side; and
 - a user manipulatable control coupled to the linkage by insertion of the user manipulatable control into the inner panel from the interior side of the inner panel, the user manipulatable control being operable to selectively actuate the latch through the linkage between the plurality of states.
2. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 1, wherein the door includes a trim panel coupled to the interior side of the inner panel, the trim panel having an interior side opposite to the inner panel and an aperture, wherein the linkage is securable to the door such that the linkage is accessible from the interior side of the trim panel through the aperture, and wherein the user manipulatable control is at least partially insertable through the aperture from the interior side of the trim panel to couple to the linkage.
3. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 1, wherein the user manipulatable control includes an inside door handle, and wherein the plurality of states includes an open state and a closed state.

4. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 3, further comprising a cable connected between the linkage and the latch, wherein the inside door handle includes a projection, and wherein the linkage includes a cable actuator coupled between the cable and the projection, the inside door handle being operable to actuate the latch through the projection, cable actuator, and cable between open and closed states.

5. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 3, wherein the inside door handle is a self-docking type inside door handle.

6. (Currently Amended) A door latch assembly for installation on a door of a vehicle, the door having an inner panel, an outer panel, and a cavity defined between at least portions of the inner and outer panels, the inner panel having an interior side, the door latch assembly comprising:

a latch securable to the door at least partially within the cavity and actuatable between a plurality of states;

a linkage coupled to the inner panel, the linkage being operably coupled to the latch and accessible from the interior side;

a user manipulatable control coupled to the linkage by insertion of the user manipulatable control into the inner panel from the interior side of the inner panel, the user manipulatable control being operable to selectively actuate the latch through the linkage between the plurality of states; and

a housing coupled to the linkage and the door, wherein the linkage is coupled to the inner panel through the housing.

7. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 6, wherein the housing includes a mounting flange fastened to the inner panel.

8. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 1, further comprising a cable connected between the linkage and the latch, the user manipulatable control being operable to selectively actuate the latch through the linkage and cable.

Claims 9-16 (Cancelled).

17. (Original) A door latch assembly for installation on a door of a vehicle, the door having a frame and a trim panel coupled to the frame, the trim panel having an exterior side, an interior side, and an aperture in communication between the exterior and interior sides, the door latch assembly comprising:

a latch securable to the door and located on the exterior side of the trim panel, the latch being actuatable between open and closed states; and

a self-docking inside door handle assembly at least partially insertable within the aperture from the interior side to couple to the frame through the aperture without the use of fasteners and to operably couple to the latch, the inside door handle assembly being operable to selectively actuate the latch between the open and closed states.

18. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 17, further comprising a linkage securable to the frame on the external side, the linkage being operably coupled to the latch and accessible from the interior side through the aperture, wherein the inside door handle assembly couples with the linkage when the inside door handle assembly is at least partially inserted into the door, and wherein the inside door handle assembly operates to selectively actuate the latch through the linkage between open and closed states.

19. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 18, further comprising a cable connected between the linkage and the latch, wherein the inside door handle assembly includes a projection, and wherein the linkage includes a cable actuator coupled between the cable and the projection, the inside door handle assembly being operable to actuate the latch through the projection, cable actuator, and cable between the open and closed states.

20. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 18, further comprising a housing coupled to the linkage and the door, wherein the linkage is coupled to the door through the housing.

21. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 20, wherein the housing includes a mounting flange fastened to the frame on the exterior side.

22. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 18, further comprising a cable connected between the linkage and the latch, the inside door handle assembly being operable to selectively actuate the latch through the linkage and cable between the open and closed states.

23. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 17, wherein the inside door handle assembly includes a clip adapted to secure the inside door handle assembly with respect to the door when the inside door handle assembly is at least partially inserted into the aperture from the interior side.

24. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 17, wherein the inside door handle assembly includes a housing and an inside door handle pivotally coupled to the housing, the housing being sized to be press-fit into the aperture and to remain secured within the aperture when the inside door handle is operated to selectively actuate the latch between the open and closed states.

25. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 17, wherein the trim panel defines a plane, and wherein the inside door handle assembly is coupled to the door by moving the inside door handle assembly substantially perpendicular to the plane.

Claims 26-34 (Cancelled).

35. (Original) A door latch assembly for installation on a door of a vehicle, the door having an outer panel with an interior side and an exterior side, the door latch assembly comprising:

a latch securable to the door, located on the interior side of the outer panel, and actuatable between a plurality of states; and

a linkage operably coupled to the latch;

a bracket coupled between the latch and the linkage, the bracket being sufficiently resilient to retain the linkage in a position relative to the latch.

36. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 35, wherein the door includes an aperture communicating between the interior and exterior sides, wherein the linkage is positioned by the bracket to be accessible from the exterior side through the aperture.

37. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 36, further comprising a user manipulatable control insertable at least partially through the aperture from the exterior side to couple to the linkage, the user manipulatable control being operable to selectively actuate the latch through the linkage between the plurality of states.

38. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 37, wherein the user manipulatable control includes an outside door handle, and wherein the plurality of states includes an open state and a closed state.

39. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 37, wherein the user manipulatable control includes an outside door lock, and wherein the plurality of states includes a locked state and an unlocked state.

40. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 37, wherein the user manipulatable control includes an outside door handle and an outside door lock, and wherein the plurality of states includes an open state, a closed state, a locked state, and an unlocked state.

41. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 35, wherein the door includes an aperture, and wherein the linkage is positioned by the bracket to at least partially extend through the aperture.

42. (Original) The door assembly of claim 35, wherein the linkage includes a sill button, and wherein the plurality of states includes a locked and an unlocked state.

43. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 35, wherein the bracket is flexible.

44. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 35, wherein the bracket comprises at least one of rubber and resiliently deformable plastic.

45. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 35, wherein the linkage is operably coupled to the latch by a cable.

46. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 35, wherein the linkage is coupled to the door in substantially the same position as the position relative to the latch when the latch is secured to the door.

Claims 47-56 (Cancelled).

57. (Original) A door latch assembly for installation on a door of a vehicle, the door having an outer panel with an interior side and an exterior side, the door latch assembly comprising:

a latch securable to the door and located on the interior side of the outer panel and actuatable between a plurality of states;

a user manipulatable control securable to the door;

a linkage operably coupled between the latch and the user manipulatable control;

and

a shield at least partially covering the linkage along a length of the linkage between the user manipulatable control and the latch to at least partially restrict access to the linkage.

58. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 57, wherein the user manipulatable control includes an outside door handle, and wherein the plurality of states includes an open state and a closed state.

59. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 57, wherein the user manipulatable control includes an outside door lock, and wherein the plurality of states includes a locked state and an unlocked state.

60. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 57, wherein the user manipulatable control includes an outside door handle and an outside door lock, and wherein the plurality of states includes an open state, a closed state, a locked state, and an unlocked state.

61. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 57, wherein the user manipulatable control includes an inside door lock, and wherein the plurality of states includes a locked state and an unlocked state.

62. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 61, wherein the inside door lock is a sill button.

63. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 57, wherein the shield member is flexible.

64. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 57, wherein the shield member comprises at least one of rubber and resiliently deformable plastic.

65. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 57, wherein the linkage includes a cable.

66. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 57, wherein the shield member substantially covers all sides of the linkage along the length of the linkage.

67. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 57, wherein the shield member encapsulates the linkage between the latch and the user manipulatable control.

68. (Original) A door latch assembly for installation on a door of a vehicle, the door having an outer panel with an interior side, an exterior side, and an aperture communicating between the interior and exterior sides, the door latch assembly comprising:

a housing accessible from the exterior side through the aperture; and

an outside door lock at least partially received within the housing through the aperture from the exterior side, the outside door lock having a flange portion, and first and second states, the outside door lock being freely removable from the housing in the first state and the outside door lock being resistant to removal from the housing in the second state, a portion of the door surrounding the aperture being coupled between the flange and the housing when the outside door lock is in the second state.

69. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 68, further comprising a latch securable to the door on the interior side and actuatable between locked and unlocked states, wherein:

the housing includes a linkage operably coupled to the latch;

the outside door lock couples to the linkage when the outside door lock is at least partially received within the housing; and

the outside door lock is operable to selectively actuate the latch through the linkage between the locked and unlocked states.

70. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 69, wherein the outside door lock is operable to selectively actuate the latch by turning a key inserted into the outside door lock.

71. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 69, wherein the outside door lock includes a central axis and an extension positioned a distance away from and rotatable about the central axis, the extension being engagable with the linkage.

72. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 71, further comprising a cable connected between the linkage and the latch, wherein the linkage includes a cable actuator coupled between the extension and the cable such that the outside door lock is operable to actuate the latch through the extension, cable actuator, and cable between the locked and unlocked states.

73. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 68, wherein the housing includes a cylindrical opening, and wherein the outside door lock is received within the cylindrical opening of the housing.

74. (Currently Amended) A door latch assembly for installation on a door of a vehicle, the door having an outer panel with an interior side, an exterior side, and an aperture communicating between the interior and exterior sides, the door latch assembly comprising:
a housing accessible from the exterior side through the aperture; and
an outside door lock at least partially received within the housing through the aperture from the exterior side, the outside door lock having a flange portion, and first and second states, the outside door lock being freely removable from the housing in the first state and the outside door lock being resistant to removal from the housing in the second state, a portion of the door surrounding the aperture being coupled between the flange and the housing when the outside door lock is in the second state;

~~The door latch assembly of claim 68, wherein the outside door lock includes including a projection, the projection being retracted in the first state to retain the outside door lock in the housing and extended in the second state in which the outside door lock is insertable in the housing.~~

75. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 74, wherein the projection is biased toward an extended state with respect to the housing.

Claims 76-83 (Cancelled).

App. Serial No. 10/757,053
Response to Sept. 15, 2005 Office Action
Amendment dated Jan. 17, 2006
Atty. Docket No. 087801-9061-02

84. (Original) A door latch assembly for installation on the door of a vehicle, the door latch assembly comprising:

a latch having at least one projection;

a slot along which the latch is movable with respect to the door, the slot dimensioned to slidably receive the at least one projection, the latch movable between a first state where the at least one projection is located at a first location along the slot, and a second state where the at least one projection is located in a second location spaced apart from the first location along the slot, the latch being securable to the door in the second state.

85. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 84, wherein the slot is formed by a channel coupled to the door.

86. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 84, wherein the at least one projection is a pin.

87. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 86, wherein the pin includes an enlarged head and a shaft portion extending between the latch and the enlarged head, the shaft portion extending through the at least one slot, and the enlarged head being positioned on a side of the at least one slot opposite the latch.

88. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 84, further comprising a carrier panel securable to the door, wherein the slot is located on the carrier panel.

89. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 88, wherein the slot includes a first end and an opposite second end, the first end being open to receive the at least one projection, wherein the latch is maintained within the slot by a stop on the carrier.

90. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 89, wherein the stop is a cradle that supports the latch in the first state.

91. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 84, further comprising a linkage operably coupled to the latch, wherein the door includes an external side, an internal side, and an aperture communicating between the internal and external sides, the linkage being accessible through the aperture from the external side when the latch is in the second state.

92. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 91, further comprising a user manipulatable control insertable through the aperture from the external side to couple with the linkage when the latch is in the second state.

93. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 92, wherein the user manipulatable control is an outside door handle.

94. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 92, wherein the user manipulatable control is an outside door lock.

95. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 84, further comprising an inside door lock operably coupled to the latch, wherein the door includes an aperture, the inside door lock extending through the aperture when the latch is moved to the second state.

96. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 95, wherein the inside door lock includes a sill button.

97. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 84, wherein:
the at least one projection includes a first projection and a second projection;
the slot is a first slot, and
the door latch assembly includes a second slot;
the latch is movable between the first state in which the first projection is located along the first slot in the first location and the second projection is located along the second slot in a first location of the second slot, and the second state where the first projection is located along the first slot in the second location spaced apart from the first location of the first slot and the second projection is located along the second slot at a second location spaced apart from the first location of the second slot.

98. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 97, wherein the orientation of the latch is fixed by the first and second projections and the first and second slots at the second locations.

99. (Original) The door latch assembly of claim 98, wherein the orientation of the latch is dependent upon the position of the latch between the first and second states.

Claims 100-115 (Cancelled).